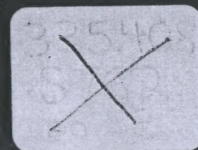


# TORTURE IN BRAZIL

TESTIMONY GIVEN  
TO THE ROME  
SESSION  
OF THE  
RUSSELL  
TRIBUNAL



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## Introduction

This pamphlet features a small part of the testimony which was given to the Second Russell Tribunal on repression in Brazil and Latin America, which held its first session in Rome during April 1974. The session was opened by E. Biocca, who delivered a detailed and harrowing account of the systematic use of torture by a number of South American governments. Mr. Biocca analysed the implications of this savage development and his report is referred to by a number of witnesses, whose statements are featured below.

There were more than a dozen of these, all of whom described the circumstances of their arrest and torture, and all of them were exceptional in securing their eventual release.

In making this selection of the evidence, we have edited out a good deal of the repetition which occurred, in order to spare the reader. Of course, this repetition did provide corroboration of the individual stories told, since many witnesses were tortured in different cities of Brazil, sometimes by different methods, but clearly all as a result of the same co-ordinated policy of terror.

We have omitted a number of valid testimonies which are concerned with the precise methods of torture. This enables us to concentrate on the main issues: the individual distress which is inflicted, as a matter of state policy, on opponents of the regime and their families; and the grotesque ill-effects that this policy produced on the wider Brazilian society.

The press, the Church, the institutions of civil life, all suffer in this dreadful context. So do legions of ordinary people whose main concern remains the struggle for a livelihood. The courage and resilience demanded of these normal and heroic people who find themselves compelled to resist such barbarism is reflected very plainly in the testimony which we reproduce, which itself represents the merest fraction of the suffering which has been inflicted on the peoples of Latin America.

*Testimony from the following witnesses is partially reproduced in this pamphlet: Rolando Fratti, Tullo Vigevani, Maria Do Socorro Vigevani, Rene de Carvalho and Fernando Gabeira. These persons were interrogated by Lelio Basso, Vladimir Dedijer, Francois Rigaux, Georges Casalis, Albert Soboul and Giulio Girardi: members of the Tribunal.*

## Torture in Brazil

The first witness we report is *Rolando Fratti*, a Brazilian, but whose father was born in Italy.

"I was arrested on 8 May 1969 and detained incommunicado until 20 August of the same year. Then I was moved to the 'Tiradentes' Jail because the DOPS (Department of Political and Social Order) had no more room for political prisoners. There I enjoyed for the first time my right to receive relatives, but neither lawyer nor doctor. On the 6 September of the same year I and fourteen comrades were exchanged for the American Ambassador Elbridge, and I owe my release to this action.

As for torture, I think we've already heard enough here. However, I would like to mention some details about what I've suffered and seen while in prison.

The first thing they proposed to me when I arrived at the DOPS (whose Chief Police Officer was then Vanderigo de Arruda) was that if I answered five questions I would be released the following day and that a three-year sentence passed on me in my absence would be annulled by simple order of the head of DOPS.

They expected my collaboration with the police in the establishment of the new ruling order in the country and they would even give in exchange a monthly wage and also a reward for every piece of information I managed to give and they also promised that I wouldn't be harassed by the police. One must remember that that was the twelfth time I had been arrested in Brazil. Obviously, I could accept none of these offers. I couldn't accept such conditions for my release, and I also refused to answer the five questions.

After this, the Chief officer called Rozante, another DOPS officer, and I, were taken to the third floor, to the tortures room, where I received beatings, all sorts of insults, was undressed and hung on the 'parrot's perch' in which position they connected electric wires to various parts of my body: my big toes, ears, and penis. The electric instrument used besides producing burnings, causes also a short-circuit which gives the prisoner a feeling that he's undergoing a complete disintegration.

Another method of torture used was "momentary drowning", which consists in introducing into the prisoner's nose a thick fluid through a tube. It really gives you the feeling of being drowned.

In general, prisoners faint after these "jokes". I must confess that I never lost consciousness nor my control of myself. This kind of torture, followed and accompanied by burnings by cigar and cigarettes — I still have some marks on me — blows with a ferrule, lasted in my case an hour and forty minutes. I could reckon the time because in the torturers' room there was a big clock on the wall. I remember per-



fectly well that at a certain moment someone came into the room, someone whom I identified as the doctor who accompanies the tortured. Addressing himself to the torturers he told the officer Rozante (I didn't manage to identify the other seven torturers): "If you were told to kill this fellow, one more minute will be enough; if not, stop it!" And they did stop it. There was no order to kill me.

From there I was taken to a cell which they call solitary confinement. I was left in this cell completely alone for 18 days. For 13 days I didn't manage to swallow anything because the shocks applied to my throat had caused an inflammation which only allowed me to swallow liquids and even then, with difficulty. After 18 days I was taken out and put with 29 comrades in a room measuring 30 square metres".

In reply to a question about opposition from the Church, he said:

"One may state that a fair section of the Church in Brazil opposes the fascist regime in an effective way. As proof of this, we have the number of priests who have been arrested. Even a bishop, Jorge Marcos de Oliveira, in charge of the ABC diocese, was detained eight days in the DOPS. Among my prison mates there were several priests, who were tortured like the others, with no difference. One of them, Brother Tito is now in France. He's a bit mad as a result of the tortures inflicted on him.

There is another — I think his name is Teitel — who is now living in Belgium, and there are others who were released but are being watched. Dom Helder Camara had two of his secretaries assassinated by the police. Thus, there is also repression against this section of the Church.

The revolutionaries receive sympathy and help from this section. This is very important for us. Very important. It saved the lives of many revolutionaries indeed."

Lelio Basso thanked Fratti for his testimony, and added: 'When Fratti was released from prison he went to Santiago in Chile, where I got to know him as a member of the committee which Brazilian emigres had set up to denounce the repression. Thanks to him and his friends on the committee we owe the present initiative: the first idea of setting up a Russell Tribunal on Brazil to denounce the torture internationally came from this group of Brazilian refugees; I want to thank Rolando Fratti publicly for his contribution to the cause of liberty in Brazil, in Chile, and here today with us.'

Another Italian, married to a Brazilian wife, was *Tullo Vigevani*, a journalist:

"I was near my home, to be precise at Rua Dom Vilares when I was arrested on 2 August 1970. I lived in Vila Guarany, just a few hundred metres away. I was walking down the road carrying a pack of clandestine newspapers, which denounced among other things the death of Olavo Hansen and simply urged the working class to organize itself. The papers just said that students shouldn't accept the re-introduction of school fees, which meant restricting education to an elite. Nothing more than that. A lieutenant of the Public Force of the state of Sao Paulo, which at that time was already known as the Military Police, thought I was suspect and decided to detain me. His suspicion was confirmed. I was carrying clandestine papers.

After solitary confinement and interrogation I was submitted to the parrot's perch for a whole afternoon and other tortures, including ferrule blows to all parts of the body all night.

My house had already been found. Five days had passed since my arrest and my wife hadn't been home in the meantime. But when she went back home, she was arrested and immediately brought to where I was, and we were tortured together for a week so as to force one of us to talk — all this in spite of her being four months pregnant.

What did they want to know? From my wife nothing! Even the Supreme Military Court unanimously acquitted her in the very Military courtroom which, in general, sentences all prisoners, even if they are eventually acquitted for total lack of evidence.

Even though there were no accusations against her, she was tortured just because they wanted to know where she had slept, where she had lived, during those five days after my arrest.

Fifteen days after I was arrested we were sent to the DOPS. There we were submitted to a normal interrogation.

There was a comrade there, whose name is unknown to me but who was called by the nickname of "Fininho". When he left some comrades said that he had been taken to the Military Hospital. Some 15 or 20 days later, this comrade returned to the DOPS and was put in the same cell as me. He was completely encased in plaster, from the top of his head to the soles of his feet.

What had been the cause of these injuries? This comrade worked in the Philips factory, which is located in the district of Tatuape in Sao Paulo. He had been accused by one of the directors of that factory as possibly being responsible for handing out subversive or clandestine leaflets inside the factory. The director wasn't sure he was responsible, but the DOPS tortured him virtually to death, simply to find out whether he had been leafleting in the factory. As he kept denying the accusations they waited three months to let him recover physically, and then released him as if nothing had happened to him!"

Tullo Vigevani's wife, *Maria Do Socorro Vigevani*, then spoke:

"I was arrested on 6 August 1970 after the arrest of my husband. I was tortured together with him, as he has said, despite the fact that I was four months pregnant.

We were tortured together with electric shocks. Since they couldn't inflict many tortures on me with electric shocks and the pau de arara (parrot's perch), they would apply them to Tullo (my husband) such as electric shocks administered while he was sitting on the 'dragon's chair' in front of me so as to force me to confess where I had been, the names of my comrades, and any information I could give them.

As I was giving no information whatsoever to the police, to the torturers, we were tortured for three or four days in the OBAN with that kind of torture, after which we were transferred to the DOPS, where the interrogation was the normal one.

I think that when all of us give our testimonies here we do so not as specific cases. Rather, we are speaking in the name of hundreds and thousands of prisoners



in Brazil who have undergone these same violent tortures which have resulted in the death of numerous comrades, among which are some members of our organization, such as Olavo Hansen and "Marcos" Rui Aguiar, who was tortured and murdered by the dictatorship."

*Tullo Vigevani* had been released from earlier imprisonment in 1965. One of the questions he was asked concerned how it had been possible for him to survive underground for such a long period, despite the network of informers and the general threat of torture to those sheltering opponents of the regime. His reply was:

"Between 1965 and 1970 I lived in a house considered as highly suspect because I was the only resident and because there was a constant flow of packets in and out. This was because for a long time I devoted myself to printing a newspaper which carried news and ideas which would not otherwise be published.

For five years there were no questions from my neighbours, or from the residents of the district, and despite the atmosphere of repression, and the government's and police's encouragement to denounce any suspect, no comment was ever made against me. Indeed, I was only arrested eventually by a military policeman, a lieutenant, an officer, — I don't believe I would have been arrested by a sub-officer or a soldier.

The officer was unknown to me. However, he was certainly one who was trained in and accepted the philosophy of repression, the philosophy which consists in the police controlling the whole of the population. It was due to that that I was arrested on the street.

But for five years, while I was underground, there was never any denunciation of us nor interest in doing so on the part of the people.

I may say that, however small, this is evidence of concrete sympathy of the people with those who have decided to act in a militant way in the resistance against the military dictatorship. It's true that the whole population don't act in a militant way, but they do participate somehow as a whole."

Another witness, economist *Rene de Carvalho*, provided some direct evidence of American involvement in the regime of torture. In reply to questions on this subject he replied: "There were several pieces of American apparatus at the Barracks of the First Battalion of the Army Police in Guanabara, in the room in which I was tortured. We managed to find out that these were the so-called 'truth machines'. They were in a corner of the room. One of those in charge of the team which tortured me was a Brazilian economist and lawyer who had studied methods of psychological torture, theory of torture, intelligence and analysis of information, in the United States... I didn't manage to read the name of the company as the machines were largely covered, but what was clearly visible was the country of origin — United States — and some technical specifications. The first [piece of evidence that the apparatus was designed specifically for torture] was the existence of a chair provided with straps and attachments of a nature reducing the likelihood of any other use. At best such a chair might be used by doctors or dentists, but one can't imagine a machine completely flat and very long being used by doctors or dentists. It was evident that the chair and straps were designed to render you im-

mobile. In the second place, these machines were in fact in the torture room of the First Battalion of the Army Police of the State of Guanabara. It is very unlikely that they could have had any other function."

The main extract from the proceedings of the Tribunal is the testimony of *Fernando Gabeira*, and his responses to questioning, which we reprint almost complete. Fernando Gabeira is a 33 year old journalist, formerly with one of Brazil's leading newspapers. He opened his testimony to the Tribunal with the following statement:

"I was arrested in the State of Sao Paulo in January 1970, I was surrounded by police who, when they saw I was trying to escape, shot me in the back. As I fell I heard one of them say, "Shall we finish him off?" and another answer: "No, we need more information". They took me to the 'Hospital das Clinicas' in Sao Paulo, where in an emergency operation, doctors managed to remove a bullet which had gone through my stomach, a kidney, the intestines and the liver.

While I was still suffering post-operative shock, police came to the hospital. There was an argument with the doctors, who opposed police insistence on interrogation in my condition. But the police insisted, came into the room, roused me, and began the interrogation, though without physical torture.

During the first 24 hours of the interrogation, they simply wanted to know who I was. But I had no documents with me, no wallet, nothing at all. I knew the information they would want: who was I? who did I know? what were the addresses of people I knew who were opposing the Brazilian government?

During this first 24 hours I was moved to the Military Hospital, where the police had more freedom and where shift teams were appointed to watch me and afterwards to carry out the interrogations.

These interrogations were made at night, and at times which varied a great deal. Sometimes they would wake me at unexpected times, for example at three in the morning, and start the questioning.

At this stage there was still no use of physical torture. There was a sort of psychological torture, if it can be so-called. They were feeding me with serum by means of probes and a common practice was to tell me: "Well, now you're going to die because we're removing the serum."

This phase went on the some time until they managed to get me out of the hospital, against what would have been medical advice for I was not in good enough health to leave hospital.

They took me to undergo the OB ('Bandeirantes Operation') which was almost out of use at that time. There were only three of us: myself, recovering from an operation, with a big scar but more-or-less in good health, Brother Tito de Alencar, (whose testimony we have heard) and a comrade, Corporal Jose Mariani, who had had his testicles smashed by the police in Minas Gerais.

Now they began a very severe interrogation. They started questioning me using electric shocks and blows with a ferrule, because, although the parrot's perch is the most common method of torture in Brazil, they were afraid that if they put me in such a position, it would completely open my wounds again, since I had an enormous scar and I was still in a post-operative condition.



I wasn't tortured by the people who arrested me. Later on, when I was imprisoned, and when there was not much going on, I found out how they are organized: they have a commando group who go out on the streets, following clues and making arrests, a team of torturers, and a team of analysts, in charge of studying evidence, its internal contradictions, and contradictions with other testimonies available. The analysts work with material concerning organizations, the resistance movement, the Church and liberal sectors of society.

They have specialists on every movement. Whenever torture was carried out, any information was passed on to the analysts, who would work on it and send back the exact questions to be put during the following sessions and the contradictions that had been found. As the teams in charge of torture were always changing, the weakest points of the personality could be found, and exploited. This is how they used information.

From personal experience, I know that real torture only begins when they start applying electric shocks. It's part of a wider process. That is to say that when we enter a prison they force us, for example, to remain kneeling on the floor, looking at the cells where those who have been tortured are thrown half-dead and they also keep us awake for a long time. This is a procedure which is supposed to break our resistance. And after that they start the actual torture, which is extremely well-thought out.

The first time I was tortured, I felt that they hated me, they certainly gave me the impression that they hated me. There were twelve people who shouted abuse and questions at me, all at the same time, not allowing me time to think. I felt as if they really hated me deeply. Later on, however, I realized it was all a farce. One of them, during one of the last sessions of torture, received a telephone call while in the torture room on an extension line, and I managed to see all this. He stopped the torture, went to the telephone, answered it and as it happened, it was a call from a very friendly person. He underwent a complete change in his expression, spoke in a friendly way — and then returned to the torture, assuming the same expression of hate as before. Later on, they came to see me in the cell because they regarded me as a reasonably interesting prisoner, for news about me had appeared in the newspapers. And they would ask me: "How did you find my performance? How was I?" I felt as if they were following a perfectly prepared lecture. And as time went on, that is with the development of torture in Brazil, and judging from the letters we received, we began to perceive that it was not only a highly developed technique but also that it has evolved a great deal in the last four years. And integral to it are the pre-torture tactics of showing half-destroyed comrades, and sleep denial. (Nowadays they employ highly sophisticated sound equipment and cells where the temperature can be changed abruptly. For example, there is a cell at the PE—Army Police — situated at Rua Barao de Mesquita, Rio de Janeiro, which they call "the fridge", where the temperature can be changed in such a way that one feels cold for a long time. There are also cells where we were kept so as to completely lose any sense of time, cells where one loses any sense of day and night, and where sound equipment produces dreadful noises all night, all in fact, part of the pre-torture process.)

All this is based on my own experience. It's a view which is being confirmed

as the situation in Brazil develops.

I've seen testimonies that deal with torture in a very general way, and I agree it's important to deal with torture in a general way, but torture in Brazil, where a military coup aiming at developing monopoly capitalism and consolidating monopolist capitalism's hegemony over other sections of the bourgeoisie occurred, could not be crude medieval torture. It is, in fact, a torture that embodies both the historical experience of all the counter-revolutionary movements and also all technical means available at the time: psychological and technical expertise.

For example, I felt they knew how to use our bodies that every piece of information produced some reaction. Every item of information given meant that we were not to be submitted to stronger pressure, and as they understood very well what frightened us, they provided us with a sort of code: information means less torture. But from the moment that some comrades gave information after yielding to this code, the torture was increased. That also was a form of torture, that is to say the disruption of a logic which they had provided us with.

I believe that when using such a system — I'm no expert, but I feel it's true — they're trying to assimilate modern psychological ideas. It's not really working fully, but at least the analysts have a fairly developed intellectual capacity.

That is a summary of my own experience and the impressions I gained of torture in Brazil."

Lelio Basso, who was the chairman of this session then invited questions of which the first was from Professor Laurent Schwartz: "Your description seems to indicate that many people are implicated in the apparatus of torture; that you have seen and heard around you many torturers and participants in torture. Could you tell us how many you saw participating in your own torture, and roughly how many torturers and police you estimate there to be in Brazil?"

"The second question is: what did you do afterwards, that is to say after you left prison? Did you leave Brazil immediately? Did you stay there? And if you stayed, did the press report your case? We have just heard reports of considerable courage on the part of a number of papers: I would like to know how, and to what extent, and in what way the press refers to these matters, and also to what extent intelligent people, those belonging to the ruling classes, or in industry for example, know what is going on, how much they understand it and how they react?"

*Fernando Gabeira:*

"In answer to the first question: We'll never be able to know the number of people involved in the whole process of torture in Brazil because there is a decree whereby the government provides secret finance to the repressive bodies. Therefore, one never knows the amount of money involved. I observed, however, that in the OB ('Bandeirantes Operation'), which is very important, there are at least six arresting teams, made up roughly of six people each, around six teams in charge of torture, plus the analysts, whom we've already mentioned. I only managed to see the analysts at the CEREMAR, which is a naval body. There was one analyst to every resistance organization and also one for the Church.

I think that roughly speaking there are working in the OB something like two



hundred people involved in torture, including analysts, doctors, male nurses, warders and captors. In Rio de Janeiro there is a similar number working for the central organs of repression.

I was informed, however, that there are in Sao Paulo something like ten thousand informers related or belonging to DOPS (Department of Social and Political Order), but I am not sure whether the policeman who gave me these figures was trying to produce a psychological effect on me.

The network of informers received a boost after the military coup: the aim was to spread informers through all layers of society. In the first place they consist of all the porters of buildings — the paid informers. Secondly, they wanted every person to feel compelled to ring the police whenever something strange occurred in his neighbourhood. Several networks of informers previously existing within the political police were multiplied so as to make the whole repressive apparatus more efficient. I was told in Sao Paulo that these informers are paid for each piece of information they give; some receive a regular wage and others are paid for each piece of information they give. The amount paid depends upon the significance of the information given.

As for your other question, the matter of awareness among various sectors of the population of the existence of torture. It seems to me that the situation in Brazil among many sectors of the upper classes is very similar to that which existed in Germany during Nazism. Some of them know, but whenever someone starts talking about the subject among the upper classes there is an interruption. It's a way of avoiding knowing, but still knowing. They don't want to hear about it. Because to hear someone talking about it means having information. Having information means being vulnerable. Those having information are somehow susceptible to being tortured. At least, that's what I think.

As for collaboration by business, there's already a proven case. For example, the food offered in the OB is very good. One of the best meals I've ever had was inside a prison. Why? Because it was a deep-frozen meal made by an American firm called AGEL, linked to the BRAS group, and which was delivered free to the OB. The food was for all the staff of the OB, but we also received it. We had only one meal a day, but it was very good because it was given by this group AGEL, which I think is the pioneer in Brazil of deep-frozen food.

When testing the Brazilian market, AGEL had some surplus of the food and therefore they gave it to the OB. We knew that that food wasn't customary police food. Later on, it was confirmed that the group AGEL, connected to ULTRA-BRAZ, provided the 'Bandeirantes Operation' with the deep-frozen meals.

The Press may well report the 'Death Squad', but in Brazil the Press is implicated at almost all levels, and in this respect I partly disagree with the reports you mentioned. I'm talking now as a journalist who, because of developments in his newspaper, the most important in Brazil, left its employment in order to publish a clandestine paper because news was being censored.

I regard the Press as an accomplice. And as a proof I can say that in January last year 25 people were murdered. The police issued the same communique in each case: All of them had been killed in the same way. This standard communique went as follows: Mr. So-and-So, a terrorist, or a member of the resistance, was arrested

and led us to a certain place where there were other members of his organization. When we found them, his comrades fired and as Mr. So-and-So was between us and the revolutionaries, he was shot dead.

Such a standard communique was delivered to several newspapers throughout Brazil, referring to several completely different cases. The journals limited themselves to publishing the communique. In several cases, for example, they gave reports about people already dead, saying that they had escaped. A paper accepts unquestioningly any information given. Therefore, newspapers in Brazil are altogether implicated in the regime of torture. There is no such thing as the naive journalist unaware of the torture going on. They all know it very well. Some of them have been tortured and have resumed their previous work. They know the story from inside. But the fact is that an almost overwhelming majority of newspapers do not report torture in Brazil.

There is however, one exception — the weekly *Opinio*, which published the police communiques all on the same page. One could therefore appreciate how implausible it was to have in the same communique the deaths of four people in four different places under the same circumstances. But other newspapers maintain total silence on such matters.

As to my personal history, I was released in 1970 having spent six months in prison and having undergone some very unpleasant experiences. I was in 12 prisons in Brazil, all of them in dreadful conditions, while being questioned by all the security agencies, by the Navy, by the Army, by the DOPS of Sao Paulo, by the DOPS of Rio de Janeiro and sometimes I was placed in a dark cell, which they call 'the deaf', (as one doesn't hear or see anything), for fifteen days and then taken out again; sometimes I was given food already in a state of complete deterioration. After six months in prison I was released and left Brazil together with a group bound for Algeria."

Professor Vladimir Dedijer, the Yugoslav historian now teaching in the United States then asked: "Fernando Gabeira, are you tired? May I put a question to you? I would like to bring up a new subject, the problem of intimidation of families of political prisoners. Not long ago, during the Second World War in Yugoslavia there was the case of a peasant woman Galinka Pavlovich. She hid five hundred partisans near my detachment. Then the royalist, fascist, troops came and arrested her and her two daughters and said to her 'We are going to kill your daughters if you don't reveal where the partisans are' and she refused and they cut the throat of the younger one and the older one and then herself. I visited her grave last year.

"So I would like to ask you, seeing as we know from documentation and from the other witnesses that members of families have been intimidated or tortured with them. And I would like to know (I am going to put two questions): Have the members of your family been intimidated, and if so, what kind of intimidation? That is the first question. And the second question is: Do you know other cases of pressure on family members or other political prisoners designed to break prisoners down and make them reveal secrets? Excuse me if these are very painful matters. Answer if you can, if you cannot . . ."



*Fernando Gabeira*

"I believe I can answer the question in a general way but also in a more specific one.

I've got some information about a comrade, Jonas, killed in Sao Paulo during one OB by captain Albernaz. Jonas's wife and son were tortured in front of him. After which, they tortured him to death.

There are hundreds of examples of families brought into the torture room, though without being submitted to torture. The families are used as a kind of barter; "If you don't give us the information we want, this relative of yours will be tortured". There are even some extremely unpleasant cases in which men are obliged to torture their own girl friends or wives.

Then there is a kind of torture in which some comrades are forced to turn the handle which produces the electric shocks. There are also methods of collective torture in which we are made to form a closed circle and a wire is attached to us. Then we are asked to go around in circles and at the same time the electric shock producing crank is turned. That's a most unpleasant situation to be in.

There are numerous cases of family torture in Brazil. But I think that to raise them here, especially the cases of people still in Brazil, might get them into trouble. I only hope that the Brazilian dictatorship now understands the political stupidity of persecuting the families of those of us who are abroad.

But the fact is that families have been persecuted, many relatives have been arrested, and they have been used as barter in the torture process."

The next question was from Dr. Georges Casalis:

"The witness has already in part answered the question that I wanted to put to him, but I should like nevertheless to ask one particular point.

I was very struck by what you said about the new character of this torture in relation to historic movements, and that it is a torture of a person, a personalised torture, a little like personalised medicine — a pseudosomatic medicine.

What would greatly interest me would be if the Jury could be told whether this torture which you have described in so precise and impressive a manner is a torture reserved, let us say for one particular class in society. Or in other words whether it is a torture applied preferentially to members of the middle classes, and maybe particularly to the intellectual elite? And if this is the case if there are other special methods of torture which are applied to working class people and to peasants?"

*Fernando Gabeira:*

"Based on all observations of torture that I made whilst in prison (and leaving aside some exceptions as we're here to analyze the fundamental questions), I think the first point is that the kind of torture applied to each person is decided on the basis of what they call "your book of commitment".

There are different levels of torture varying according to what you did or said. You may have written an article in a newspaper asserting the necessity of democracy, or you may have been leafleting on the street.

There are several categories. The first kind of torture for those considered to be non-active is usually limited to leaving them in a room with very unusual decor.

Very unusual because of its very bright colours and because it is very well prepared. These prisoners who are considered to be inexperienced, are taken into this room and then shown the torture room and every single piece of torture equipment. They're then shown people who have already been tortured for some time to see the state they're in. Following that, they're shown people tortured for a longer time and one of these is picked out and hung upside down on the parrot's perch, after which there begins a process of torture with this person. The 'non-activists' are left to watch some of these performances in front of the torture-room door so as to hear the screams and see the state in which the tortured leaves the room.

Then they start the interrogation stage, which they describe as a process of light torture.

The most serious method of torture for this kind of person, even if he hasn't had any clear involvement, is the one which I commented upon earlier. Some comrades working in the PM — Military Police — sent me letters saying that the policemen referred to it as being a period in which they want you to feel like "a child without a mother", that is, completely lost, a period during which you're made to lose all sense of time. After that, through the use of noises and the "fridge", you're made to feel utterly defenceless, according to them. This type of person presents a very much lower resistance when facing interrogation. And for the torturers this avoids the need for any 'direct physical action' — this being their euphemism — for the usual physical assaults including electric shocks. Those considered as 'incurable' or resistant or who have been arrested several times, undergo from the beginning quite violent torture which has recently been allowed to result in death.

In almost all these cases death is now certain. The torturers subject you to very severe torture, kill you and then issue a standard communique, which has two purposes: first, to give the impression that the death was accidental to those not well aware of what's going on; second, to warn the militants still active: "Just look what we're doing! We've already killed four and this is a standard communique. They didn't die by accident, we are killing".

As far as peasants and workers are concerned, the situation is very different since some peasants are persecuted in their village. Sometimes it's even a case of mass repression, and may involve bombing.

For example, in the region where Carlos Lamarca was killed, someone present recorded a testimony which hasn't reached us yet. It concerned not just the peasants but the whole community. In the town's football field they erected a cross and started a crucifixion — tying some peasants to it, throwing salt on their bodies and torturing them in other ways.

This is a different type of torture for it's not just aimed at an individual but at the community to which he belongs as well. It is a torture designed to show everybody what would happen to them even in the event of passive resistance.

There is also a story of the murder of a worker, Olavo Hansen, which has only just been clarified. But everything now points to him being poisoned after a long process of torture, whilst held by the police.

Now, I have no doubt that those people we call the intellectual elite, stand a much higher chance of surviving. For the dictatorship, however violent it may be, is provided with some kind of political mechanism. And if the people arrested have



families known outside Brazil, the murders of such people always produce some political damage, always result in problems. But the workers, the peasants, all those people struggling anonymously, sometimes in small towns under tremendous hardship, suffer far more.

One has the feeling that repression is aimed at us personally, which is not true. The most violent pressure existing in Brazil is towards the workers and the peasants. In the case of workers it is carried out through overwhelming pressure on wages and the dissolution of their trade unions; and in the case of peasants through violently expelling them from their lands.

And this network of violence in Brazil reaches dozens of other levels. It's not only a network of violence, it's also the Press itself which, when reporting a standard communiqué in a cynical way, participates in this violence. And there is the violence put forward by television which creates myths to make people forget all this. For example, in Brazil some policemen are treated like stars. Some policemen belonging to the Rio de Janeiro Death Squad were called 'The Golden Squad' by the Brazilian Press.

The structure of violence must be seen as a whole. It's not just ordinary violence. It's a kind of violence within a particular moment of Brazilian history.

For example, I shared a cell with a militant arrested and tortured in 1935 and 1937. If we consider the differences between the torture practised in 1935, in 1937, and that now carried out, we begin to understand that the torture now practised draws on experience of the Second World War, the Algerian war, and several other important events.

If, for example, we compare the methods of torture used in Algeria with the Brazilian CODI (Centre of Operations for Internal Defence) we will find them very similar.

Inside Gomes Carneiro's room (he's one of the major torturers and also in charge of an organisation), there is the same organogram of the Resistance organizations, with all its stages, its divisions, and the rank of each person within the organization. We'll see exactly the same organogram in the film *The Battle of Algiers*. It's a history lesson which all the conservative element have been learning for some time.

They're not originating any new tortures now. If they use psychological methods it's because they've been tried successfully in the Panama School.

When 300 experts are sent to Chile in order to teach torture, this means export of "know how". When they send some quantity of goods, they also send 300 torturers ready to destroy an organization quickly, as they did in Uruguay.

To summarize, I think there are therefore these two distinctions: one, concerned with the personal level of involvement of the victim, the other, with his social level. The poorer you are, the less you'll be socially protected and the more violent and defenceless the torture will be."

Professor Albert Soboul then spoke:

"Up to now we have only heard about cases of individual torture; I mean by that torture inflicted on single individuals. But the witness has called to mind some facts which to my way of thinking are extremely characteristic of that strategy of terror of which Professor Biocca has spoken. It is a matter of cases of mass repression.

And the witness has just told us of such a case of mass repression of peasants crucified on a football ground. I think there are facts there which must be substantiated and put before the Tribunal. And I would therefore be very grateful if you could tell us precisely where, in what part of Brazil, and precisely when these incidents of repression and mass torture took place.

*Fernando Gabeira* replied:

"It happened at the time of Lamarca's murder, in September 1971, and the place was deep in the interior of the State of Bahia, I think in the region of the town of Vitoria da Conquista. The Tribunal has the testimony of an eye-witness. This testimony was also given on Swedish TV and included an account of what happened and the precise location. I'm not sure of the exact place myself."

Professor Francois Rigaux spoke next:

"An essential question concerns the systematic character of the torture, as you have described it to us. I think that it is very important to determine the responsibility of the government itself for the acts of torture which have been committed. So I am going to put some questions to you following this line of thought. Firstly, do the people who are guilty of such acts of torture belong to a specialised organization or to the police? Do you have any information on this point? Are they in uniform?

Secondly: you said that you were in prison about six months, and during all this time did you ever appear before a magistrate, judge, military auditor, or was it only the police? And I ask you what rank of person interrogated you? Thirdly, do you have knowledge as to whether any Schools of Torture exist? You made mention of such in passing, but I would like precise information on this point. And on the same subject, referring to the end of Professor Biocca's report, did you have any experience of doctors who did other than give simple treatment after torture, who participated in and collaborated with the torture sessions proper? And finally a question on quite a different subject, concerning you personally: Do you think that your arrest had any connection with your journalistic activities? Were articles you wrote the cause of your arrest, or was it for other activities? Thank you."

*Fernando Gabeira*:

"To answer the first question: The torturers in Brazil aren't organized in a very systematic way, for they belong to three bodies: the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. They also have the opportunity of co-opting members of the police who have been outstanding in the execution of their usual police duties. Not all of them are in uniform. Those in charge of direct repression on the streets aren't allowed to be uniformed. They have to infiltrate the resistance movement. There is a barracks in Leblon, Rio, where training is given to soldiers who will eventually belong to this repressive body. This is the only barracks in Brazil where long hair is allowed. This is because these soldiers are already receiving training in repression of the left. Therefore, they have to physically resemble those in the leftist movement, and with the resistance. And, also, they should have a smattering of the terminology used.

This means that if you go today to the Coliseum and meet a Brazilian policeman



disguised as a tourist spending his holidays in Europe and chat with him for ten minutes, you'll find that he's quite familiar with all the jargon peculiar to the Brazilian Resistance Movement, just as if he was one of them. This is because he has been trained to do it.

Inside the barracks you'll find that all policemen are in uniform. At the PE — (Army Police) — in Rio de Janeiro a new practice has been introduced. It's common in the Army to have the name of the soldier written on the uniform over the chest. However, now it's covered with a label stuck over the name, and in some States besides this label they have decided to stick plasters over all watches, since it's a very important point during torture to prevent the tortured having any sense of time, of the number of hours passed. This provides the police with a tremendous tactical advantage.

If one doesn't know the time one can't, later on when released, give precise information.

The structure within the barracks is officially determined. Torture is carried out in the Army Police's Barracks in Rio de Janeiro. All here are soldiers and there is a military hierarchy, with a colonel in charge. Only a patrol in charge of the arrest of one or two particular individuals is not composed of military men, just for the sake of efficiency.

I think this answers your question reasonably well.

If I remember correctly, the second question was concerned with whether during the six months I was brought before a Court.

In the first place, I want to say I was held incommunicado for almost three months. Only after this time was I contacted by a real lawyer. I say a real lawyer because at the beginning I saw one when I was being tortured. But this was a lawyer working for the police, a farce which is very common in Brazil.

After a session of torture, when the victim is not very experienced, a well-dressed gentleman, whom one would expect to be a lawyer is brought into the room. The torturers start the farce: "this gentleman is a lawyer, he has come here to help you". And the "lawyer" says: "It's vital that you tell me everything, etc. . .".

After three months in jail I came into contacts with a real lawyer, who was asked to take up my case by my family and friends. I was then brought before a Court.

And in the Court something very interesting and contradictory occurred. The Prosecutor made the accusations but didn't allow us to speak. Just as we were about to present our case, he adjourned the session.

The session was very irregular. After that, I had to go to the military court room of the State of Guanabara where military procedure was followed.

To some extent I was arrested because I was a journalist. The deadlock with the Brazilian government started when censorship was institutionalized and, after 13 December, when a body of censors was set up to examine material to be printed in newspapers. The censors were five military in uniform who had a room to the left of the editorial office. They read and decided which material could be published.

From that moment on, all journalists with a liberal background understood how the whole idea of unbiased journalism had been destroyed. Then I began to write for a clandestine paper edited by an organization of students using news which hadn't been published. I gradually took charge of this paper, whose name was

*Resistance* and aimed at publishing all censored news. As time went by my militancy deepened from that of a political militant who was just producing a clandestine paper, to that of one who challenged the Brazilian Establishment in its totality and who put forward an alternative. It was for both these reasons that I was arrested."

Professor Francois Rigaux:

"I want to return to two questions that I put to you — I perhaps made the mistake of asking too many questions at once, for which I apologise. The two questions, and one which you didn't reply to are as follows: The question of the doctors, firstly. Secondly, your appearance, if I understood correctly, after four months at a Military Tribunal. Was this in the nature of a trial, or was it simply a phase of the investigation? And on the occasion of your appearance did you have an opportunity to report that you had been tortured? Or were you rather unable to state this and had the feeling that the military magistrate knew all about the torture which had been used against you?"

Fernando Gabeira:

"Being taken to the military court room is part of the preparation for the hearing. And there is a time when judges allow the defendant to speak about the torture they may have suffered. Anyway, they seem to be quite indifferent since that's what they hear every day. And it doesn't change anything.

All confessions extracted through the use of torture are considered acceptable to them, being the basis on which all sentences are passed.

However, we did have a chance of denouncing the torture to which we were subjected, but the judge ended the session by means of a technicality just before we started to go into details.

I'll now answer the last question, that concerning doctors.

In my own case, the doctors from the 'Hospital das Clinicas' acted in a way which to me seemed very honourable, for they tried to prevent torture while I was in a post-operative condition.

But when I went to the Military Hospital there was no opposition on the part of any doctor nor did I receive direct assistance from any doctor, though because I'd been shot I was in a very delicate state internally. The doctors just sent a medical-orderly whose responsibility was to inform the doctor of my condition and to carry out the doctor's recommendations. I had no contact with, or access to a military doctor."

Lelio Basso:

"I think there was one other question which Professor Rigaux asked: whether there are any schools in which police are taught torture. And I should like to inquire myself whether you are familiar with the matter of Mitrione, an American citizen who was killed by the Tupararos in Uruguay, and had taught torture techniques in a police school in Belo Horizonte?

Fernando Gabeira:

"The situation with respect to Schools of Torture is as follows. Two methods



have been exposed. One kind was that applied for example in Rezende, a town in the State of Rio. We published in the *Jornal do Brasil* a number of pictures showing how soldiers there were preparing for a possible war. By chance I have presented one of these pictures to the jury in which is shown a crucified soldier (that is a simulated crucifixion) and an entire newspaper report describing the techniques of torture the soldiers were being taught to resist. In theory it was like saying: We are preparing ourselves against invasion by the enemy, and therefore we are submitting ourselves in advance to a method of torture so that we will be able to resist it.

The techniques developed during the military exercises in Rezende, as illustrated in the *Jornal do Brasil* (at a time when it was possible to do so) consisted in submitting the soldiers to all the types of torture they use nowadays, and also to a process aimed at breaking the solidarity of a group. They gave less food than was necessary for the number of people in the group to make them fight for the little available. It was presented as a torture which would be employed by an enemy invading our country. But in fact it was a preparation of a method which they used against us."

Professor Giulio Girardi:

"Continuing with the same line of questions, I should like to ask you whether the members of the different torture teams are exclusively Brazilian, or whether there is knowledge of the participation of foreign experts? Secondly, on the same subject: Do these schools exist only in Brazil or do Brazilians also go abroad for training in this activity? Thirdly, what, to your knowledge, (if there is any means of telling), is the proportion of cases of torture which are reported in the press as compared with those which occur but are reported nowhere?"

Fernando Gabeira:

"As for participation by foreigners, I can say that, along with several comrades who are still in prison, and thus cannot be named, I was questioned in the Navy by some American officers. One could guess it by their accent. And indeed it was confirmed that Dan Mitrione was in Belo Horizonte where he was highly praised by the Brazilian police, before he left for Uruguay on a mission.

Brazilian torturers are trained in Brazil, but also in Panama and the United States, according to my information. That is, information obtained from some young captains who joined the resistance; some of them had even taken part in this training. In Panama and also in the United States they're trained specifically in that subject which they call counter-insurgency. Part of this subject deals with torture.

Certainly such training is still being carried out in the United States and some 'know how' produced in Brazil is already being exported to Uruguay and Chile. When dealing with the Brazilian resistance, the police had a real opportunity of putting into practice all these American produced theories, which were almost ready-made, and of applying them to the Latin American situation. And apparently they have obtained results of interest to other countries, such as Uruguay and Chile. In Chile a comrade of ours was tortured in the National Stadium by a Brazilian policeman, and this fact is mentioned by the Brazilian magazine *Vega*, which puts it implicitly:

'Latin American policemen were interrogating the prisoners, and the answers were being translated.'

The only Latin American country where Spanish is not spoken is Brazil. Therefore *Veja* meant that Brazilian policemen were there. And of course they were. In fact they were organizing it. I believe that in Chile and Uruguay they are now applying all that they've learned. Not only what they've learned in the United States but also what they've developed in practice in Brazil.

I think they even hold seminar discussions amongst themselves. After their contact with the Resistance they started to use some of the things which are common among us, i.e. the circulation of internal documents. They produce such documents on specific experiments so that the whole organization is reasonably informed about the various advances in this field."

Dr. Georges Casalis:

"In describing the interaction between revolt and repression, repression and revolt, Archbishop Helder Camara talks of the escalation of violence, and of a spiral of violence. Which implies that there is violence on both sides. Clearly the kidnapping of an ambassador is an act of violence . . . and the official press seeks to justify the behaviour of the police in terms of it being a reply to the behaviour of the Resistance. What should we think of that?"

Fernando Gabeira:

"That's a very interesting question.

We know that in Brazil after 1964 'violence comes from the top' to quote Archbishop Helder Camara, i.e., violence in Brazil is produced directly by the dominant classes, by the Government.

I can tell you, for example, about the thinking which led some Brazilian comrades to kidnap the American ambassador. Such a concrete example may give better insight than a general analysis.

These comrades heard the reports that *habeas corpus*, was abolished, that contacts with prisoners weren't allowed any longer, and that comrades in prison weren't receiving food and were being tortured to death. Some, indeed, were in a very poor state of health when captured.

This then was the situation and one important consideration emerged from all the discussion about the kidnapping of the American ambassador: We must save the lives of our comrades who are near to death, for reliable information indicates they're going to be killed. One of them was actually killed before the kidnapping. His name was Lucas.

It was a rush to save the lives of those people. No doubt, it was violence against the ambassador's freedom, but one aimed at saving the lives of those people. Similarly, if in the future the peasants and the workers use force against this system it will be a highly self-defensive one, necessary for their own survival.

There is one kind of violence which may be legitimate, a violence practised by those people who, after failing to find a peaceful way out, have to work out some other way to alter the situation. This violence is, however; of a completely different nature from that carried out by those who want to preserve the structure of domination and maintain the suffering of those people."